



June 25, 2019

Greetings Santa Clarans!

By community popular demand, we have worked collaboratively to issue this update about all of the exciting milestones underway to revitalize our downtown through the Downtown Precise Plan process (Plan), along with the many steps ahead of us for informed future decision-making. The Plan for the redevelopment of the traditional downtown area, consistent with the community's goals and vision for a downtown, is underway and the City has committed significant resources to this effort. Over the last 18 months, the City has made significant accomplishments towards a new downtown vision. Below is an update of all the efforts accomplished and/or underway:

Recent Accomplishments

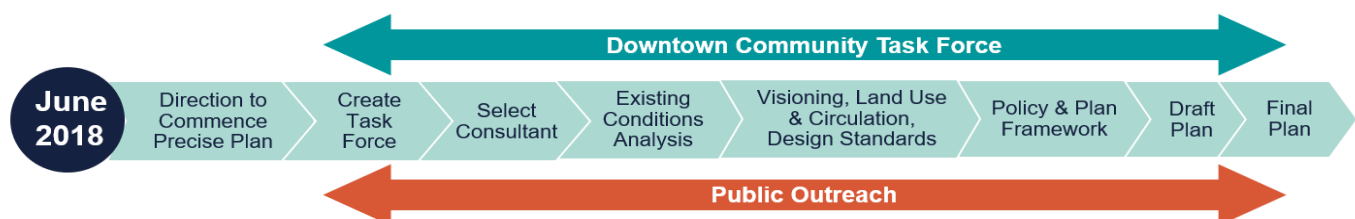
- ✓ City Council approved a \$400,000 budget for the development of a Downtown Precise Plan.
- ✓ City Council identified reinstating the downtown street grid as a priority. City negotiated and entered into an Option Agreement with Park Central Apartments L.P. (Prometheus) for the purchase of street easements for a section of Franklin and Washington Streets. This is a significant component of returning the historic street grid.
- ✓ City Council directed staff to coordinate the consultant selection request for qualifications (RFQ) with the Downtown Community Task Force (DCTF).
- ✓ City Council approved a Downtown Precise Plan process and appointed community members to a Downtown Community Task Force (DCTF).
- ✓ The DCTF was selected in December 2018 and includes representation from a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives including the Old Quad Residents Association, Reclaiming Our Downtown, Santa Clara University, the Historical and Landmarks Commission, and Cultural Commission.
- ✓ Incorporating feedback from the DCTF, the RFQ was released early 2019 with responses due on March 25, 2019.
- ✓ Consultant selection interviews are scheduled for June 28, 2019.
- ✓ A City Council update on our progress will be scheduled in October 2019.

The DCTF and Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral part of the Downtown Precise Plan process to produce a final plan that is broadly supported by the community and various stakeholders in Santa Clara, and provides a clear common vision for the ongoing development of the area over the next 20 to 30 years. The Plan process will include several meetings with the DCTF who will guide key decisions for the Plan and will include separate focus groups for potential developers and other representatives of the community, and significant opportunities for direct community input through community meetings, workshops, on-line surveys and public hearings.

Current Status and Next Steps

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) -- To closely tie the RFQ process to community objectives, the City took the unprecedented step of including two members of the DCTF on the review panel for the RFQ. To ensure that we dedicate the time to review each step of the process together, the RFQ schedule was extended by approximately six months to accommodate input on the scope of the RFQ, selection of DCTF members for the RFQ review panel, and working with those members to schedule meetings and interviews. Interviews with potential consultant teams are now scheduled for the end of this month. This approach provides greater opportunity for direct community input into every stage of the planning process: collaboration takes time when done right and we believe that this was a good step to build trust and stronger partnerships. Once a consultant has been selected, their contract will be considered by the City Council. Once a consultant has been hired, a more detailed project schedule will be developed. An overview of the typical planning process timeline is depicted below. The planning process will start with an existing conditions analysis, followed by various forms of community outreach, including workshops, to receive community input on visioning, land use, circulation, and design standards. Layered within this process will be review and input from the DCTF.



Financial Feasibility – A key milestone to be completed through the planning process is a feasibility study that will serve to inform the financials for build out of the downtown (e.g., infrastructure costs, assumed development scale achieve feasibility, build out assumptions, etc.). This study will analyze the financial feasibility of implementing the downtown elements that have been previously discussed in the community, including restoration of the traditional grid streets, incorporation of public art, architectural design requirements, and other objectives for new downtown development identified through the Downtown Precise Plan process. This study will identify costs that factor into a Market Analysis.

Market Analysis -- Another study that informs future decision-making is a market analysis that speaks to the development that would be most successful in the downtown. Key elements that are analyzed in a market analysis are density and building heights, residential unit types, and level of retail that can be supported. For example, a market analysis will study the retail availability in the surrounding region and retail patterns of residents. This data helps us understand land-use and retail activity that is saturated in this market and where there are strategic opportunities. A study of this type provides information on build-out of rental and for-sale housing and which types would be most successful. These types of studies also assist with understanding types of office development that would be most successful. While the City does own some property in the downtown (leases expiring in 2021 and 2022), the majority of downtown property is held by private property owners (who can determine whether to redevelop their property or not). The market analysis can help define the level of development capacity and density that would inform private property owners on whether to redevelop. Altogether, a market analysis advises on the best composition of these types of development for strategically entering a market for commercial and housing uses.

Urban Land Institute -- The next DCTF meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2019 to discuss next steps, as well as an opportunity for the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to participate in the development of the Plan. The ULI is a nonprofit research and education organization with offices in Washington, D.C., Hong Kong, London, and Frankfurt. Its stated mission is "*to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.*" They have participated in a number of significant land use projects throughout the Bay Area and their work involves drawing experts from throughout the nation to advise on strategic developments and opportunities. Their work would serve to inform and advise us on future decision-making that balances out the financial reality with the community interests.

Santa Clarans, this is not the first time that there has been an effort to revitalize the downtown and, unfortunately, those efforts were not successful. I understand the heightened interest and I share in the excitement. Curing the mistakes of six decades takes time and I am committed to working on this project, but these measured and strategic steps will take time. The City has listened and will continue with this effort, while balancing other City priorities. We remain available and, while many challenges are sure to be ahead of all of us, we seek the continued collaboration to work hand-in-hand with the many stakeholders on the broad spectrum of interests that we must work through to advance this effort. In fact, this project requires new approaches to implementing this development project, and we are re-writing this approach with each step that we take as outlined above. One additional example is this letter itself, which the City drafted and shared with the Downtown Task Force members, Reclaiming Downtown leadership, and Old Quad Neighborhood leadership to make sure that we communicated to the public and remained on the same page. Lastly, a Downtown Precise Plan [website](#) has been developed and will be updated with more information as we begin the planning process. To be added to the Downtown Precise Plan email notification list, please contact the Community Development Department at planning@santaclaraca.gov or by phone at 408-615-2450.

In community spirit,



Deanna J. Santana
City Manager

ABOUT REVITALIZING THE SANTA CLARA DOWNTOWN-- After fifty-five years, and at least seven failed attempts, the revitalizing the downtown effort is focused on bringing back an "economically viable" and/or "architecturally distinctive" Downtown to Santa Clara. Community and stakeholder research has not found another downtown that's been destroyed and returned to its original footprint anywhere in this country. This means that Santa Clara would be the first City to do this, since the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed San Francisco.